

## THE CLASSIC APPROACH TO BANDHAS



*Bandha* is usually translated as “lock”. There are three main bandhas: Mula bandha, Uddiyana bandha and Jalandhara bandha. They were developed in the context of pranayama practice and are powerful advanced practices that were done for the purpose of affecting the body’s subtle energy, NOT structural support.



According to the yoga tradition, when we are born there is nectar of life (amrta) contained in the “lake of the mind” located in the head. In the newborn it’s full. If you look in the eyes of a young child, you will see that glow. At puberty a large quantity of this essence moves down to the region of genitals, and we

become fertile. The rest of amrta drips down slowly being consumed in the fire (in the navel region). Once all of the nectar is gone, the life ends.



Below the fire is the place where over time impurities accumulate. Those impurities clog our systems and prevent prana from entering the central channel (sushumna nadi). So it is advisable to clear out those impurities. How do we do that? We practice the three bandhas, engaging them in certain order and giving them our undivided attention.



### MULA BANDHA

To lift the impurities (mala) up to the fire.



### UDDIYANA BANDHA

To hold the impurities close to the fire to burn them, and evaporate amrta to replenish the “lake of the mind”.



### JALANDHARA BANDHA

To prevent amrta from falling into the fire.

### TECHNIQUE

**INHALE:** Lengthen up through the spine. **HOLD THE BREATH:** Displace the head slightly backward and lower the chin (*Jalandhara bandha*). **EXHALE:** Gradually pull the abdomen in from the pubic bone to the sternum. **HOLD THE BREATH:** Keep pulling the belly in and up (*Uddiyana bandha*). **WHILE STILL HOLDING THE BREATH OUT:** Engage and lift the pelvic floor muscles and maintain this contraction for the duration of the practice (*Mula bandha*). On the next inhalation release *Jalandhara bandha* and *Uddiyana bandha* and continue with the same cycle as above. Repeat for at least 12 cycles.

### ATTENTION:

You need adequate preparation before you can begin your bandha practice, both over time and within a single session. Traditionally, you would work toward a classic 10:10:10:10 breath ratio before you could begin the bandha work (being able to inhale 10 sec, hold 10 sec, exhale 10 sec, hold 10 sec and maintain that ratio for 12 breaths comfortably).